
STUDIO 40

Painting With Electrons... A New Art Form for the "Video Age"

by Roy M. Smith

Dissolves ... fades ... cuts ... and wipes. Not exactly the language of a painter, is it? But then, Norman Pollack, the artist who created the works reproduced here, is no ordinary painter. Because Pollack doesn't use paint. He uses electrons.

Just as composers are investigating new avenues of music through sophisticated electronic equipment, Pollack and several contemporaries are opening the doors to a remarkable new world of visual expression through the wonders of video technology. By using an electron beam as his "brush" and color screen phosphors as his "paints," Pollack creates abstract video pictures of the most striking hues and textures. What you see here are photos of them, taken from a color television monitor—still life paintings on an electronic canvas.

Pollack feels that the coming of age of this new art form can be traced to the very existence of modern-day technology and industry, and its impact on our lives. "My art is borne out of the innovations of the electronic media and the resourcefulness of industry. It interacts with, and reflects, the changes in our highly technological society."

He began his endeavors in electronic painting while producing a video tape on abstract electronic art. He became engrossed with its many intricate permutations of color, line, and form, and began to see each image as a separate, still-life painting. Today, his involvement has led to a mastery of such complex electronic components as intricate switching panels, video synthesizers, waveform generators, and rescan monitors.

By directing the operation of this equipment, Pollack selects film, video tape, live performance, graphics, or

other visual sources, and controls the manner in which special electronic effects bridge one video source to another. The process is not unlike drawing a picture on a rubber sheet, and then stretching and contorting it.

Pollack doesn't always create his "paintings" purely from abstract electronic manipulation. He may begin with a simple figure; a form made of lucite blocks, mylar®, or shaving cream; or bedsheets arranged on a wall. He then elaborates on the basic theme with his elec-

tronic controls, layering light upon form, color upon image. When he sees a particularly expressive pattern in the continuously moving and evolving images, he records it with his cameras. The results are sometimes peaceful, sometimes explosive, and always provocative.

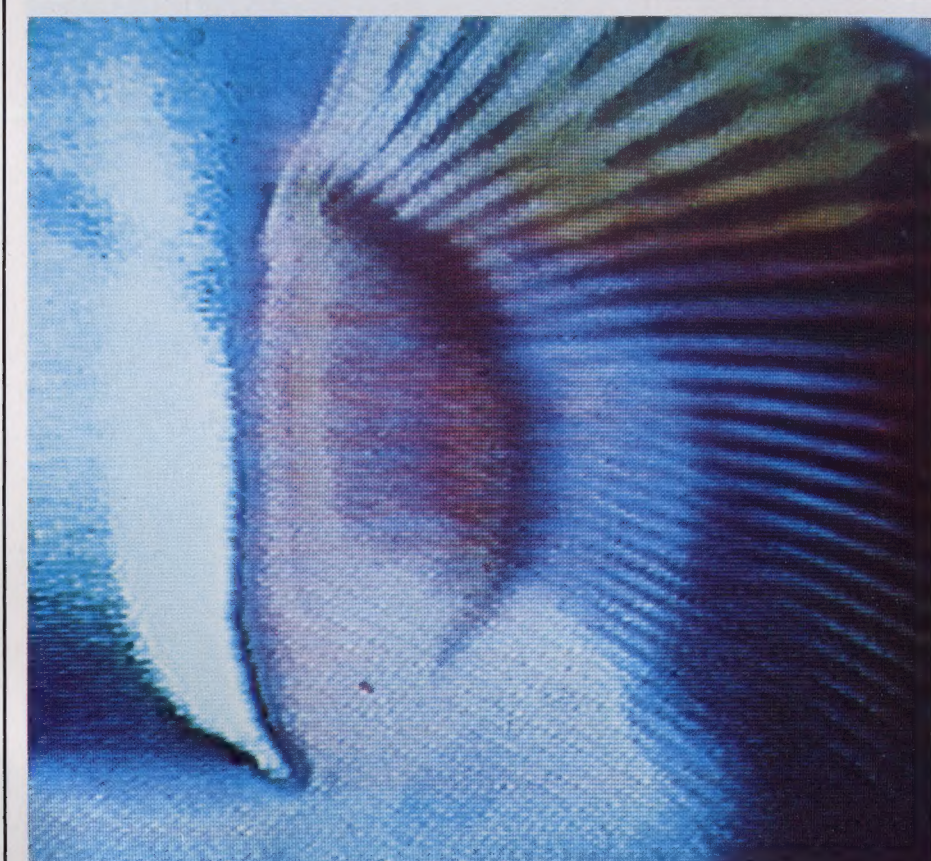
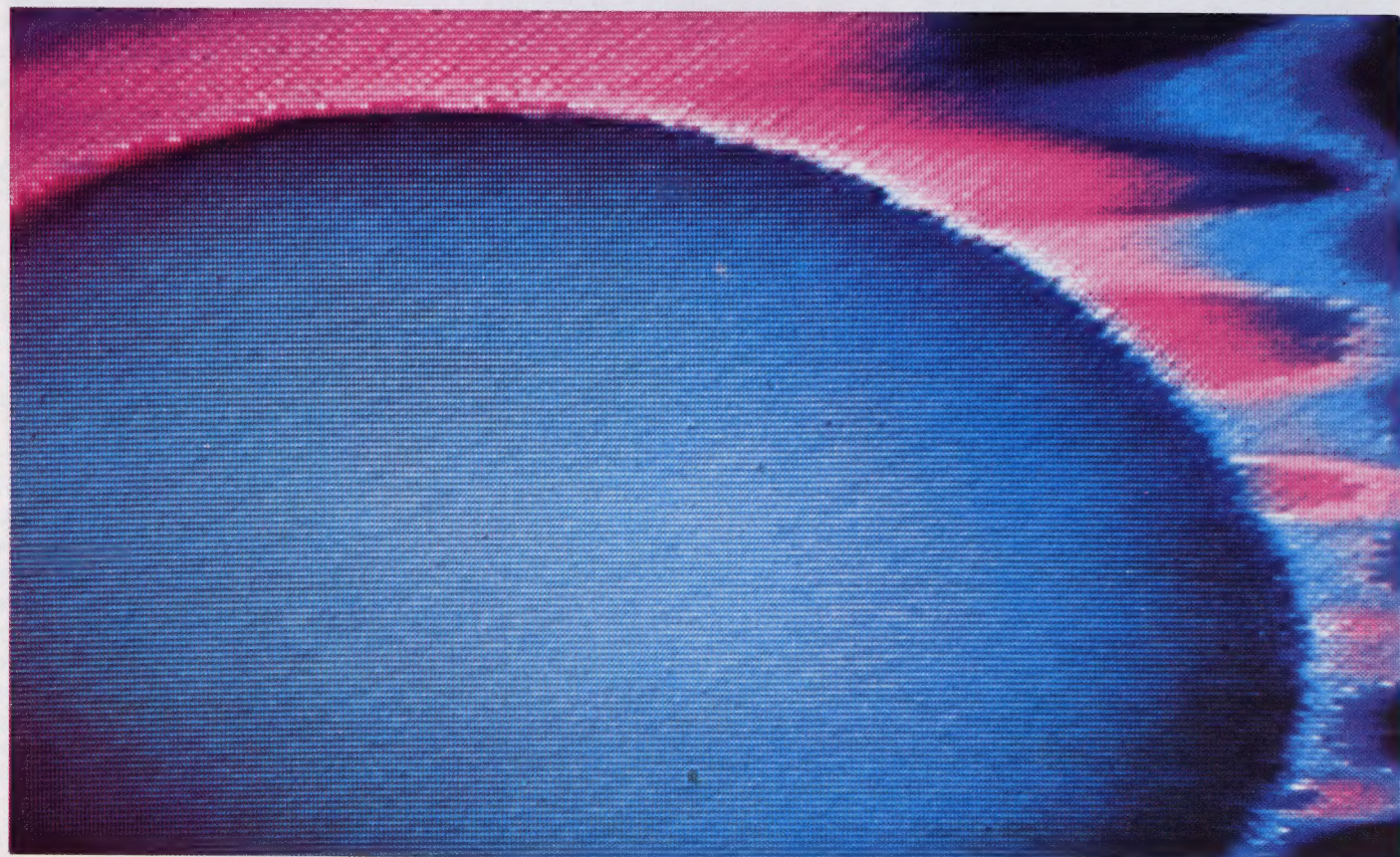
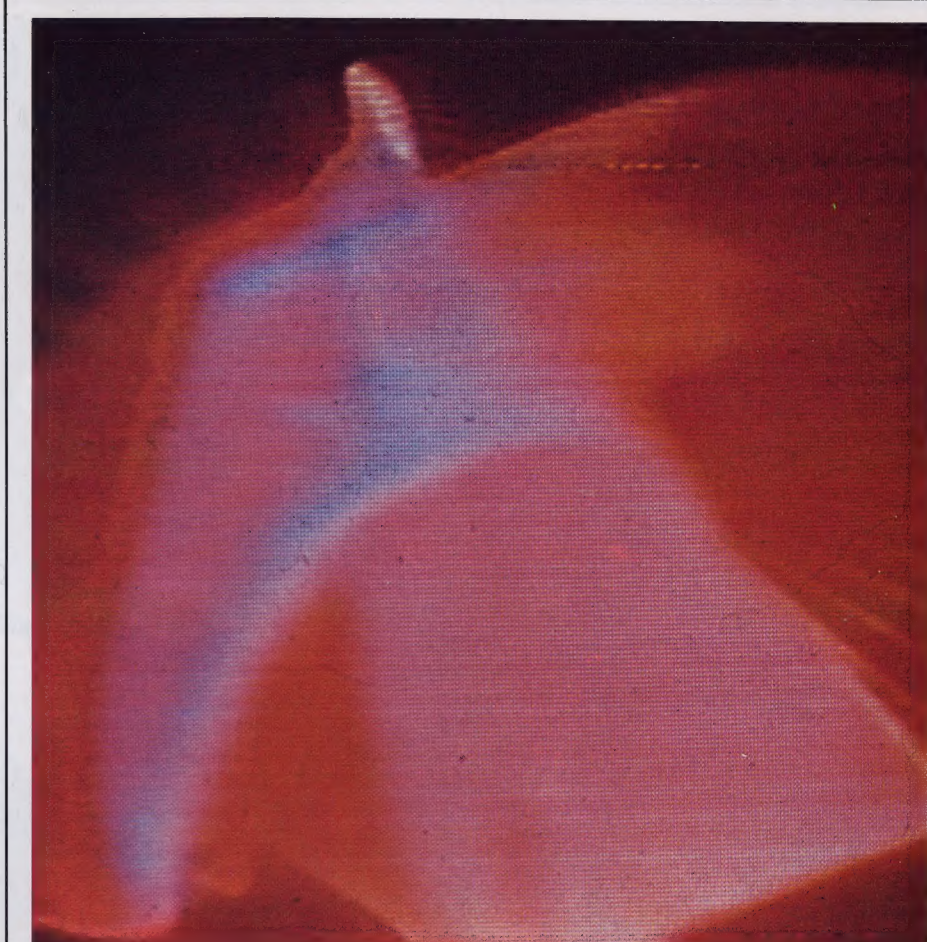
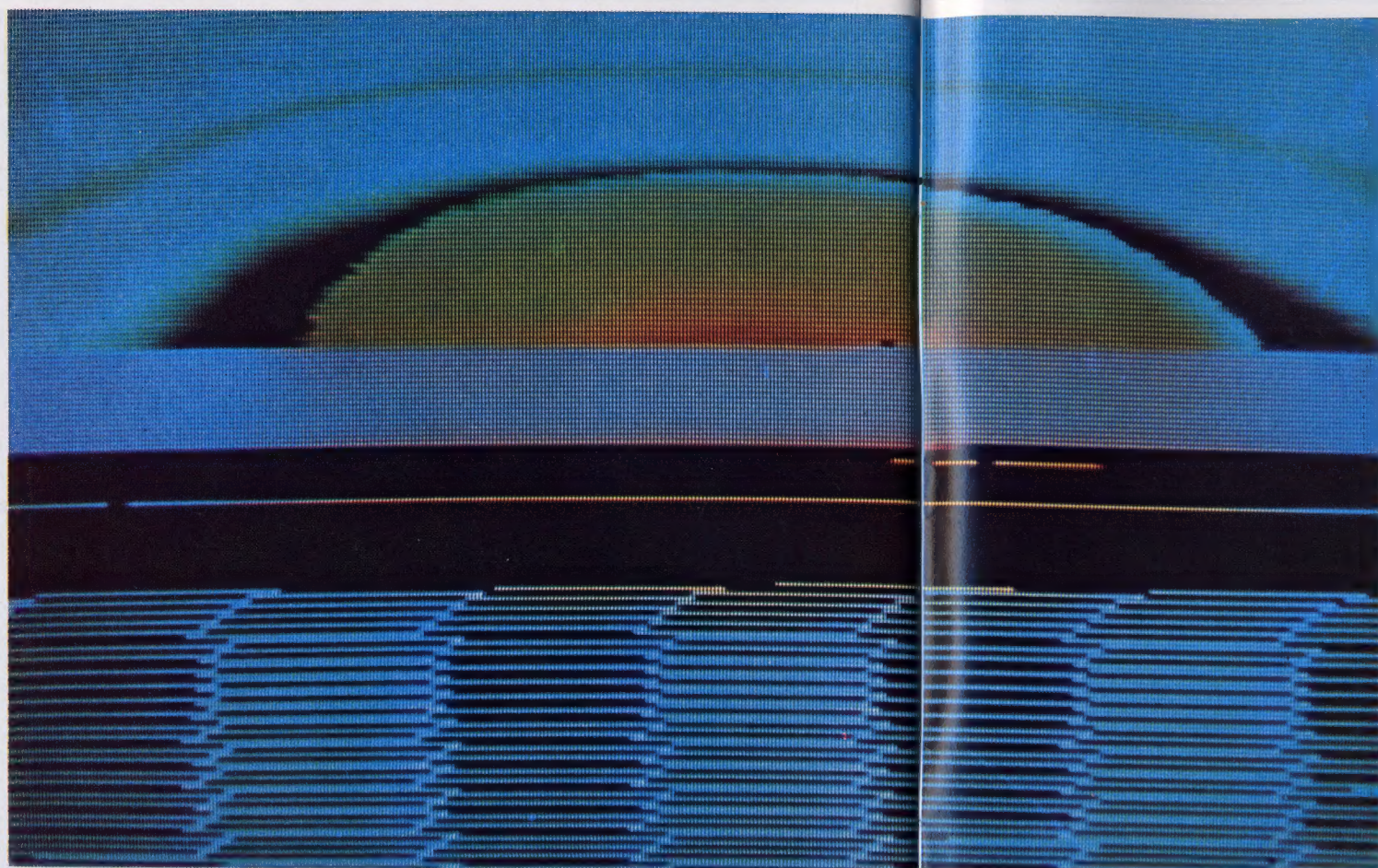
The artist sees virtually no end to the artistic and commercial applications of video art, and is currently at work on several diverse projects. For example, several fabrics based on his art will be available in the





near future, and a recent breakthrough in the printing trade has made it possible to "translate" his works into a dye transfer print series and silk screen limited editions. Pollack also creates specially commissioned tapestries, and is now developing imagery to be used as set designs to enhance all types of music during concert performances. As Pollack puts it, "The transformation of electronic imagery into viable art forms and design mediums has only just begun. Its impact and scope, I believe, is impossible to calculate."

"40" readers interested in obtaining additional information on Norman Pollack's works may write to his attention at 511 W. 232 St., Riverdale, N.Y. 10463.



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